

Appln. No.: 09/626,954
Amdt. Dated September 29, 2005
Reply to Office Action dated July 5, 2005

Remarks/Arguments

1. Status of Claims

Claims 1-26 and 28-44 are pending in this application.

In the Office Action mailed July 5, 2005, claims 1-26 and 28-44 were rejected in view of references asserted under 35 USC §§ 102 and 103. Independent claims 1, 4, 9 and 15 have been amended. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the above amendments and consideration of the enclosed remarks. Applicant submits that no new matter is added.

2. Claim Objections

Applicant has amended claim 1 to include "subsidized by a mail campaign sender" after "indicium" as suggested by the Examiner. However, Applicant is unclear about the Examiner's second objection concerning claim 1, line 4 and why claim 15 is being objected to. Applicant has not found text in either claim 1 or claim 15 which would require changing "a" to "the" before "mail campaign sender." Applicant is willing to make any necessary correction if the Examiner clarifies where that amendment should occur.

3. Rejection under 35 USC §102

On page 3 of the Office Action mailed July 5, 2005, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-6, 9-12, 15-16, 19-20, 22, 25, 28-31, 36, 39 and 42 under 35 USC §102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,055,520 to Heiden, et al. ("Heiden '520").

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. However, solely in order to expedite prosecution, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 4, 9 and 15 to recite that the delivery address is disclosed in human readable form to the user of the postage metering system. The amendment is supported at least in the specification at paragraph 26 and Figure 3. Applicant reserves the right to pursue claims including those of the scope as originally claimed.

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Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection is moot and respectfully submits that claims 1-6, 9-12, 15-16, 19-20, 22, 25, 28-31, 36, 39 and 42 are patentable over the cited reference.

The present invention is directed to a method of operating a postage metering system for printing postage indicia information on a business reply mail piece in a manner that complies with United States Postal Regulations requiring that a delivery address and corresponding postage indicium be printed at the same time when printing postage indicium from a computer-based postage metering system. According to the present invention, the delivery address is disclosed to the user of the postage metering system in human readable form, is printed in human readable form on the face of the business reply mail piece, and may be encoded in the postal indicium. In accordance with one aspect of this invention, the method of operating this system includes the steps of having a mail campaign sender transmit a registration ID number to a data center; the registration ID number being associated with a particular delivery address; generating and receiving postage indicium information from the data center where the postage indicium information has been generated using the registration ID number containing data relating to the delivery address; disclosing the delivery address in human readable form to a user of the postage meter system; and printing the postage indicium on an associated business reply mail piece for delivery to its intended designation.

There is absolutely no teaching or suggestion in Heiden '520 of a business reply mail piece where the postage indicium appearing on the mail piece is generated using a registration ID number containing data relating to the delivery address, and where the delivery address is disclosed in human readable form to the user of the postage meter system.

To the contrary, Heiden '520 is directed to a system for the production of mailpieces where the delivery address is not imprinted on the mailpiece, nor is it disclosed in human

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readable form to the party producing the mailpiece. This is done to preserve the confidential nature of mailing lists in Heiden '520. And, more importantly, Heiden '520 does not teach or disclose the generation and use of a registration ID number as disclosed in the present invention.

Instead of generating a registration ID number to be used to generate postage indicia as presently claimed, Heiden '520, in the embodiment relied upon by the Examiner at col. 8, lines 24-47, uploads a mailing list to a local PSD. The postal indicia are generated directly from the mailing list, and at the same time the system generates security information to be used to validate the indicia. There is no disclosure of generating a registration ID number used to generate the postal indicia.

Further, Heiden '520 does not disclose the delivery address in human readable form to the party producing the mail piece. Heiden '520 discloses the following in col. 1, lines 44-48: "Thus it is an object of the subject invention to provide a mailpiece which is not imprinted with a delivery address in human readable form and methods and systems for producing such a mailpiece without disclosing the delivery address to the party producing the mailpiece."

In addition, Heiden '520 disclosed the following in col. 1, lines 62-64: "A postal service can scan the barcoded information to recover the delivery information and determine the delivery address, and the mailpiece can be produced and delivered to the postal service by a party who does not have knowledge of the delivery address." For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 1, 4, 9 and 15 as amended are allowable over Heiden '520. Claims depending on those independent claims are also allowable for the reasons provided above and on their own merits.

In addition to being allowable for the reasons provided above, Applicant also respectfully submits that dependent claim 2 is allowable because the Examiner has misinterpreted the

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teachings of Heiden '520 with respect to this claim. Heiden '520 teaches that the delivery address is only printed by the postal service once the delivery address is scanned and received at the postal service. The user at the postage metering system producing the mailpiece does not print the delivery address. In fact, as disclosed above, in Heiden '520 the delivery address is never disclosed in human readable form to the user producing the mailpiece, so it can never be printed by that user. It is only disclosed to the postal service processing the mail piece. This process is described in Heiden '520 in col. 6, lines 35-67:

Fig. 2 shows a scanning system for use by a postal service to scan an indicia such as are shown in FIG.1. Mailpieces MP are imprinted with indicia 10 and are not otherwise imprinted with a delivery address in human readable form. As mailpieces MP move in the direction of arrow 32, field 30 is scanned by barcode scanner 34 which is controlled by IBIP controller 36. . . . Once the delivery address is recovered controller 36 will control printer 38 to print delivery address DA onto mail-piece MP in a conventional manner. In other embodiments of the subject invention a conventional, a one dimensional postal barcode PBC, such as the well known "Postnet" barcode, can be printed onto mailpieces MP to facilitate further sortation of mailpieces MP. Once mailpieces MP are printed with delivery address DA they can thereafter be handled and delivered in a conventional manner. (Emphasis supplied).

To the contrary, dependent Claim 2 requires "printing the delivery address on the business reply mail piece at the postage metering system . . . " Accordingly, Applicant submits that dependent Claim 2 and all of the pending claims are not anticipated by Heiden '520.

4. Rejection under 35 USC §103(a)

On page 9 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 7-8, 13-14, 17-18, 21, 23-24, 26, 32-33, 35, 37-38, 40-41, and 43-44 under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly rendered obvious over Heiden '520 in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,121,565 to Allott, III ("Allott '565").

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection for least the reasons stated above. Claims 21, 23 and 24 depend directly on indirectly upon Claim 1 and are patentable along with Claim 1

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over the cited references for at least the reasons stated above and on their own merits. Claims 7-8, 26 and 41 depend directly and indirectly upon Claim 4 and are patentable along with Claim 4 over the cited references for at least the reasons stated above and on their own merits. Claims 13-14, 32-33 and 43-44 depends directly or indirectly upon Claim 9 and are patentable along with Claim 9 over the cited references for at least the reasons stated above and on their own merits. Claims 17-18, 35, 37 and 38 depend directly and indirectly upon Claim 15 and are patentable along with Claim 15 over the cited references for at least the reasons states above and on their own merits.

Applicant submits that the references are not properly combined, and that the combination does not render the invention as presently claimed obvious. Further, the Examiner is improperly using hindsight and using the current claims as a roadmap to argue that the Applicant's claimed invention is obvious.

The Examiner relies on Allott '565 for teaching a method of delivering a business reply mail piece using expiring indicia with a warning to the user when attempting to reply after the expiration date. However, there is absolutely no suggestion in Allott '565 for a customer to contact a data center to obtain postal indicium information because Allott '565 pre-prints the postal indicia on the envelope. Further, Applicant submits that there is absolutely no suggestion in Heiden '520 or Allott '565 of applying postage indicium to a business reply mail piece where the postage indicium is generated using a registration ID number and data relating to the delivery address, where the delivery address is disclosed in human readable form to the user generating the mailpiece, and where an expiration date is sent by the mail campaign sender and providing a warning for attempting to mail the business reply mail piece after the expiration date.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that for at least the reasons states above, the cited references do not alone or in proper combination render obvious the invention as presently


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claimed in claims 7-8, 13-14, 17-18, 21, 23-24, 26, 32-33, 35, 37-38, 41 and 43-44.
Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

5. Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this application are in condition for allowance, and favorable action thereon is requested. If the Examiner finds reason not to allow all claims, then Applicant respectfully requests a telephone interview with the Attorney signed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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